

COLUMBIA COUNTY PROCUREMENT PROCEDURE MANUAL

Section I Introduction

- A** **Reference is made to the *Financial Management Policies Manual* for a statement of Columbia County (the County) policies relating to procurement and purchasing. The purpose of this manual is to deal with procedures used in implementing those policies.**
- B** **Purchasing Authority**
- 1** Only the department manager and one other individual in the same department will be authorized to input purchase orders. The department manager may submit a "Delegation of Authority" authorization to the Purchasing Agent containing the following information:
 - a** The name of the person in the department who is designated to input purchase orders at a level I approval.
 - b** The amount the person is authorized to approve.
 - c** Date of authorization. (It is not a requirement that the department manager delegate this authority.)
 - 2** The Purchasing Agent is authorized to amend purchase orders in regard to price and vendor in the best interest of the County. Specifications of the requisition will not be changed without first consulting with and informing the department manager.
 - 3** The operation of and training in the use of the automated purchasing system by user departments is the responsibility of the Procurement Department. The method utilized for the training of personnel should be at the discretion of the Procurement Department.

C Personal Use Purchases

Columbia County allows employees to purchase directly from suppliers as long as the following guidelines are followed:

- 1** The supplier must be willing to sell directly to employees; no supplier shall be coerced or pressured in any way to sell to employees, or to offer discounted prices to employees for its products.
- 2** The supplier must be made fully aware that the purchase will be for the individual employees use and not for the Columbia County Board of Commissioners.
- 3** The employee must arrange delivery and payment for purchase with the supplier; no deliveries or invoices for the personal purchases to the Columbia County Board of Commissioners will be permitted.
- 4** The employee must pay all applicable sales and use taxes to the supplier.

Section II

Purchase Orders and Check Requests

- A** Requests for purchase orders/checks will be initiated by the user department. The following rules will be strictly adhered to regarding the issuance of purchase orders/checks:
- 1** The department making a purchase will be responsible for determining whether there are sufficient funds in the budget to cover the item. Three to five quotations are required for requests between \$500 and \$20,000, and will be listed on the request under "documents". Items >\$20,000 requires formal bid procedures. The departments will enter requests directly into the computer system.
 - 2** Prior to issuance, the requests will be checked by the Purchasing Agent to determine if purchasing requirements are met. The Finance Department will verify account coding, budget compliance, and reasonableness.
 - 3** Purchase orders will be issued daily by the Procurement Department, if feasible, on purchase requests exceeding \$500. Items less than \$500 will be treated as check requests, and handled directly by the Finance Department.
 - 4** Three levels of approval must be obtained prior to making any purchases more than \$500. Level I is the user department, level II is Finance Department, and level III is Purchasing Department.
 - 5** The Procurement Department will send the purchase order to the requesting department, which then mails the purchase order to the vendor. The purchase order will be signed by the Purchasing Agent or his designee. No further hard copy of the purchase order will be used.
 - 6** The Finance Department will match invoices that have been received for payment with purchase orders/check requests in the computer. Invoices should be sent directly to the Finance Department by the vendor, and the signed and dated packing slip from the receiver will be the proof that the goods, materials, etc., have been received and payment is authorized.
 - 7** Before authorizing payment the Finance Department will compare invoice quantities and the accuracy of the calculations with those indicated on the packing slips, and also quantities, prices, and terms with those on the purchase orders/check requests, where applicable.
 - 8** When all appropriate items have been matched, the Finance Department will issue payment. As payments are recorded in the system purchase orders will be closed (encumbrances will be relieved), or adjusted, if an "open" or "blanket" purchase order has been issued.
 - 9** Purchase orders may not be amended without approval of the Purchasing Agent.

- 10** If for some reason a purchase order must be voided, the department manager must notify the Procurement Department.
- 11** Purchase orders may be issued during normal working hours only. If a situation arises where an emergency purchase must be made, the Procurement Department must be notified the following working day. An order will be submitted and a purchase order will be issued to the vendor in order for the vendor to have a purchase order number on the invoice for billing purposes. These situations should, however, be rare.
- 12** If an invoice is received by the Finance Department without a purchase order number, it will be sent to the appropriate department for approval, and then returned to the Finance Department for final approval before payment is made.
- 13** Check requests may be used for expense reimbursements, COD purchases, and other purchases less than \$500.00. Travel expenses must be submitted on an employee mileage expense form. Check requests may not be used to request office supplies available in the Procurement and Distribution Department.
- 14** All purchases more than \$20,000 will require use of the competitive bid process, and will be subject to the approval of the Board of Commissioners (the Board).
- 15** All purchases made by County departments will be periodically checked to determine necessity. Multiple orders under the purchase order threshold level each month will require a purchase order.

Section III

Blanket Purchase Orders

- A** Blanket purchase orders may be issued to vendors who are used frequently during the month. Blanket purchase order requests will be submitted in the same manner as any other. The Purchasing Agent will have the authority to decide when and if blanket purchase orders will be issued.
- B** As with all others, when submitting invoices to be paid against a blanket purchase order, the purchase order number must be clearly identified on the invoice.

Section IV

Bidding - General

- A** If competitive bids are required, the specifications should be prepared by the user

department and submitted to the Purchasing Agent for review. Dependent upon, but not limited to, various factors, such as complexity of the specifications, dollar amount, and experience of the user department in specification preparation, the Purchasing Agent should provide guidance in specification development.

- B** The Procurement Department will contact the newspapers for proper advertising at the earliest convenient time. Copies of bid proposals and/or newspaper ads will be kept to substantiate that competitive bids were requested.
- C** Specifications for all bids will be posted on www.demandstar.com by the Procurement Department to ensure each prospective bidder is issued a complete and uniform package. Records should be maintained by the Procurement Department indicating to whom and when prospective bidders were notified.
- D** Pre-bid conferences serve the purposes of (1) answering questions or clarifying any confusion concerning difficult specification requirements, and (2) ensuring that all interested parties to a proposal have equal access to uniform information. At the discretion of the Purchasing Agent, and dependent upon the complexity of the bid itself, a pre-bid conference may be held with prospective bidders.
- E** All bids will be sealed and will be safeguarded by the Purchasing Agent until the bid opening.
- F** At the bid opening, all bids will be recorded on a standard *Bid Tabulation Form*, which should be signed by the Purchasing Agent (or his designee) and witnessed. After validation of the bid responses by the Procurement Department, the results will be submitted to the user department for evaluation and recommendation.
 - 1** Department managers may approve low bid purchases up to \$15,000. If other than low bid, the department's Oversight Committee must also approve.
 - 2** The Oversight Committee may approve low bids up to \$25,000. If other than low bid, and between \$15,000 and \$25,000, the Board must also approve.
 - 3** The Board will approve all bid purchases more than \$25,000.
- G** The County has the right to refuse any and all bids.
- H** Where competitive bids are unnecessary, the Procurement Department will obtain quotations, consider consolidating purchases, and avoid purchase contracts that may involve potential conflicts of interest on the part of any public official.
- I** State or Federal contract bids will be subject to their respective bidding practices and requirements.
- J** Additional purchases based on prior bids, excluding Public Works projects, are allowed as long as all of the following conditions are met:

- 1** Low bidder agrees to maintain its price.
- 2** Quantity ordered is the same or less.
- 3** Specifications and items ordered are identical to originals.
- 4** Market conditions remain the same.
- 5** Funds have been budgeted for the specific expenditure.
- 6** Request takes place during a twelve-month period from date bids were opened.

Section V

State Contract Purchases

- A** The requirement for three quotations for purchases over \$5,000 may be waived by the Purchasing Agent on items purchased through a contract that has been bid and negotiated by the State of Georgia Department of Administrative Services.

- B** The competitive bid procedures for purchases more than \$5,000 may be waived on items purchased through a contract that has been bid and negotiated by the State of Georgia Department of Administrative Services upon recommendation of the affected Oversight Committee.

Section VI

Items Requiring Bids

- A** All contracts to build or repair any courthouse, jail, bridge, causeway, or other public works, and all contracts to construct, reconstruct, or maintain all or part of a public road, including, but not limited to a contract for the purchase of materials, for the hiring of labor, for professional services, or for other items or services incident to such work

estimated to equal or exceed in cost \$20,000, and all purchases of goods, materials, or labor which are estimated to equal or exceed \$5,000, will be made in accordance with formal competitive bidding procedures herein set forth below. In no instances will purchases be divided to avoid bid limits.

B Invitation for bids

- 1** A notice inviting non-Public Works bids will be published at least once five business days preceding the last day set for the receipt of bids in the newspaper designated as the County Organ. Non-roadway Public Works bids over \$100,000 must be advertised for four consecutive weeks with the last advertisement five days preceding the last day set for the receipt of bids. Public Works bids between \$20,000 and \$100,000 must be advertised for at least two weeks. Roadway project bids greater than \$20,000 only need to be advertised two weeks. As determined by the Purchasing Agent, other publications will be utilized on an as needed basis to advertise announcement of bids. Such notice will include a general description of the goods or services to be purchased, will state the location where bid specifications may be secured, and will specify the time and place for opening of bids. If the purchase involves the use of State or Federal funds, the notice will be published four consecutive weeks in said newspaper.
- 2** The Procurement Department will, in conjunction with department managers, develop and maintain a "bidder's list". All responsible, interested suppliers may be added to the list at their request. The Purchasing Agent will also solicit bids from suppliers on the bidder's list by sending them a copy of the newspaper notice inviting bids, or such other notice, which will acquaint them with the proposed purchase. The Demandstar on-line system will also be utilized to notify vendors of upcoming Bids/RFP's.
- 3** In the event no bids are received the Purchasing Agent will solicit bids by mail, telephone, facsimile, newspaper, or by any other reasonable manner in order to secure a responsible bidder.

C Bid Deposits

- 1** Bid deposits will be indicated in public notices inviting bids. The amount of such deposits will be 5% minimum of the bid, and will be in the form of one or any combination of the following: bid bond, certified check, cashiers check or cash. An irrevocable letter of credit issued by a bank may be substituted for the above deposits only if the amount of the bid deposit does not exceed \$300,000. When it appears that the use of the bid deposit is not advantageous to the County, the

Purchasing Agent may waive the requirement.

- 2 Unsuccessful bidders will be entitled to return of the surety within 30 days after opening of the bids.
- 3 Upon failure of the successful bidder to enter into a contract within seven calendar days after the County tenders the proposed contract, the bidder forfeits the bid deposit.

D Submission and Opening of Bids

- 1 All bids will be submitted to the Purchasing Agent in a sealed condition with bid identification on the envelope containing the bid.
- 2 Bids will be submitted at the designated place no later than the time stated in the public notice inviting bids.
- 3 Bids will be opened at a public meeting at the time and place stated in the public notice.
- 4 A tabulation of all bids received will be made available for public inspection.

E Award of Contract

- 1 The Purchasing Agent will notify the successful bidder of the award when made by the Board.
- 2 Contracts will be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder. In addition to the lowest price, the Purchasing Agent, the department manager and the Board will consider such other factors as:
 - a The ability, capacity and skill of the bidder to perform the contract or provide the service promptly, within the time specified, without delay or interference.
 - b The character, integrity, reputation, judgment, experience, and efficiency of the bidder.
 - c The quality of performance of previous contracts or services including compliance with laws and ordinances relating to the contract or services.
 - d The sufficiency of financial resources and ability of the bidder to perform the contract or provide the services.
 - e The quality, availability, and adaptability of the supplies or contractual service to the particular use required.

- 1 All open market purchases will, whenever possible, be based on at least three to five quotations.
- 2 The user department will solicit quotations by mail, telephone, facsimile, catalogs or any other viable means.
 - a The user department will input a record of all open market orders and the quotations submitted.
 - b Except for emergency purchases as authorized, no officer or employee of the County will purchase any goods or services for the County except through proper procedures, and no voucher, check, or other method of payment will be honored.
- 3 All open public works quotations will be based on prequalified contractors who have met all necessary requirements to conduct business for the County.

B Purchasing of Items less than \$500

- 1 All expenditures of less than an estimated cost of \$500 will be made in the open market, without a newspaper advertisement.

C Petty Cash Expenditures

- 1 Petty cash is limited to an amount determined by the Finance Director and the department manager for each department on an as-needed basis.
- 2 A single petty cash expenditure cannot exceed the amount of the petty cash fund.
- 3 All petty cash expenditures must be supported by documentation.
- 4 Each department with a petty cash fund must assign a specific custodian to be in charge of balancing and replenishing the account on a regular basis.

**Section VIII
Office Supplies**

A Inventory and Stock Room

- 1 A stock room will be maintained by the Procurement Department. Only standard, cost effective items will be stored. A listing of those items will be issued to all departments. Items not maintained in the stock room will only be purchased from the *State of Georgia Central Supply Catalog* (the Catalog) of which copies will be available to all departments.

- 2 All departments should use the stock room and the Catalog for all office supplies. However, if an item cannot be found in the stock room or the Catalog, then normal purchasing procedures are to be followed. The department has the responsibility of determining if the item is required for the requesting employee to fulfill their job duties.

B Procedures

- 1 Each department will issue an office supply requisition to the Procurement Department, and will receive the items within a specified period of time. The goods will be charged to the user department. The requisition will be a three-part form and will contain the following information:
 - a User department name, number, and line code number
 - b Date of requisition
 - c Date items needed
 - d Number of items needed and brief description (if necessary)
 - e Signature of department manager or designated person
 - f Signature of person receiving the goods (to be signed when the order is filled)
 - g Signature of supply clerk (to be signed when the order is filled)
- 2 The original will be sent back to the user department with the order and will reflect charges placed thereon by the Procurement and Distribution Department. A copy will be maintained by the Procurement Department so that proper charges will be made to the user dept at the end of the accounting period.
- 3 All purchases of office supplies are initially charged to Inventory - Office Supplies. On a timely basis user departments will be charged with the supplies requisitioned during the period. All charges for office supplies will be based on a unit price reflecting an approximate actual cost of the item (first in-first out basis).

C Stationary Standardization Procedure

- 1 All preprinted stationary, letterheads, envelopes, etc., are to be ordered by the Procurement and Distribution Department through the office supply requisition system. The items will all follow the same design layout utilized by the Board.

Section IX
Emergency Purchases

- A** In the event of an emergency that threatens the public health, safety, or welfare of the County, the Purchasing Agent will have the authority to suspend formal competitive bidding procedures to the extent required to meet the emergency. In the absence of the Purchasing Agent the affected department manager(s) will have the same authority, but will report such emergency purchases to the Purchasing Agent promptly (within two working days if possible).

Section X
Professional Services - Requests for Proposals

- A** When determined by the County Administrator, the affected department manager(s) and the Purchasing Agent, requests for proposals may be issued for professional services including, but not limited to the following:
- 1** Engineering
 - 2** Architectural
 - 3** Surveying

4 Testing and Special Studies

5 Audit and Accounting

6 Insurance

7 Financial Management

8 Fiscal Advisor

9 Court Reporting

10 Legal

B Adequate public notice of the request for proposals will be given in the same manner as in the Procurement procedure above.

C Depending on the type of service involved, the County should look beyond price estimates or bids to qualifications of the proposer. The technical factors and qualifications of the staff and firm should be given greater weight in consideration than the cost involved.

D Each user department should be responsible for issuing requests for proposals. A written recommendation for the best firm or person for the service should be sent to the appropriate Oversight Committee for its approval before submitting to the Board for approval.

E Purchases of goods and services including professional services should have a purchase order issued in order to help provide a good audit trail, encumber the funds, and avoid duplicating routine approval of timely invoices.

F The County has the right to reject any, or all, proposals solicited under this section.

G At the discretion of the Purchasing Agent, the County may elect to negotiate price and contractual terms and conditions with the highest ranked proposer. If an impasse is met with the highest ranked firm, negotiations may be held with the next highest ranked firm and so forth.

Please refer to Appendix A: Evaluation Guidelines For Requests For Proposals for step-by-step procedures on the RFP process.

Section XI
Computer Hardware and Software Purchases

- A** Proposed purchases of computer hardware and software must be reviewed by the IT Department to ensure compatibility with the County's equipment and network system.
- B** Requests to purchase computer hardware or software must follow appropriate procurement procedures. No reimbursement will be made for out-of-pocket purchases of unapproved software or equipment.
- C** All software must be registered in the name of the County and not in the name of an individual user or user department. Registration documentation should be held by the IT Department.

Section XII
Funds not appropriated or available

- A** If funds are not available in the budget the computer system will reject the purchase order or check request.
- B** The responsibility for action to initiate additional funds rests with the user department. Budget transfer requests should be completed and forwarded to the County Administrator, the appropriate Oversight Committee, and/or the Board as applicable for approval, then returned to the Finance Department.

Section XIII
Contracts

- A** The Board must approve any lease-purchase agreement, long-term lease or contract. Exempted from this provision are short-term lease (rental) agreements, routine maintenance or service agreements, and items otherwise identified herein, which may be signed by the department manager.

- B** Contract Change Orders - Public Works -(Within Budget Restraints)

| <i>\$ Amount</i> | <i>Approvals Required</i> |
|-------------------------|---|
| <i><1,000.</i> | <i>Department manager, but limited to no more than two approvals per individual contract.</i> |
| <i>1,000 - 5,000</i> | <i>Department manager and Oversight Committee, but limited</i> |

to no more than three approvals per individual contract.

>5,000.

Department manager, Oversight Committee, and the Board.

- C** A copy of all change orders will be forwarded to the Management and Financial Services Committee for their information.
- D** The Board may, in their discretion, designate alternate signors unless prohibited by law with relation to the item being signed. However, no employee or official of the County has the authority to obligate the County in any manner without prior approval of the Board.

Section IX

Purchases from Employees or Elected Officials

- A** Purchases of goods or services from Employees or Elected Officials in excess of \$100 must be approved by the Board, and must meet the same criteria as any other purchase.

Section XV
State Specifications for Bid Items

- A** Any item that is bid by the County will use the State of Georgia specifications if there is a current state contract on the item.
- B** Any changes to these specifications, which would increase the overall cost, will have to be approved by the appropriate Oversight Committee.
- C** The Procurement Department will maintain copies of state specifications, which will be available to requesting departments.

Section XVI
Surplus Property Sales

- A** These procedures are intended to be used as a guideline under which Columbia County will dispose of surplus property.
- B** The Columbia County Board of Commissioners (the Board), through the Director of Financial Services, has authorized the Procurement Department to dispose of surplus items. As appointed agent, Procurement, is the only department authorized to enter into and sign contracts for the disposal of property; and is charged with the responsibility of assuring that all disposal actions are in accordance with the Code of Columbia County, Code of the State of Georgia, and applicable Federal government regulations.
- C** Value of Items
- The Board is authorized to sell personal property belonging to the County that has an estimated value of \$500.00 or less in the open market without advertisement and without the acceptance of bids. Personal property that has an estimated value of \$501.00 or more must be disposed of to the highest bidder either through sealed bids or by auction after

due notice has been given.

D Coordination

The Procurement Department will provide a single contact point for managers, staff, suppliers, consultants, and the public interested in information on Columbia County surplus property activities. All departments will promptly report unneeded or unwanted materials, equipment, and supplies to the Procurement Department.

Procurement will attempt to utilize excess materials to satisfy other requirements whenever possible. Procurement will oversee and supervise the disposal of all materials that are no longer of value to Columbia County.

Procurement is charged with the overall responsibility for issuing solicitations and negotiating with sources on matters of price, pick-up, vendor selection and execution of contracts.

An inventory of surplus property must be taken and presented by the Procurement Manager, or designee, to the appropriate Oversight Committee for approval. The following departments are responsible for assisting Procurement in ensuring that all items are the property of the County and do need to be declared surplus property:

- 1 Central Shop - vehicles and heavy equipment
- 2 Information Technology - computer equipment
- 3 Maintenance - miscellaneous equipment

E A resolution must be adopted by the Board declaring the property surplus and approving the sale.

F Either a sealed bid or public auction may be utilized.

G Employee Purchases of Surplus Items

To maintain fairness, reduce potential conflicts of interest, and encourage competition among all parties, any regular employee, temporary staff, or payroll outsource position of the Columbia County Board of Commissioners is prohibited from participating in the competitive sealed bid disposal or auction of surplus items.

H Receipt of Funds

Procurement Department personnel, or their designee, will be responsible for coordinating any sale action required in the disposal operations. All funds, cash, checks, or other negotiable instruments collected must be accounted for and turned over to the Finance Director as soon as possible after receipt.

I Laws and Regulations

It is essential the Procurement Department personnel be well trained and acquainted with the legal requirements and regulations governing the disposal function. When potential conflict with an existing regulation is suspected, or legal assistance is advisable, it is the responsibility of the Procurement Manager to notify management of conflicts or potential conflicts, and/or that legal counsel is needed.

- J** The Board, or its agent, retains the right to reject any and all bids or to cancel any proposed sale.
- K** The Board of Commissioners may sell an asset in as-is condition to another government entity for full trade-in value either as listed in the Kelley Blue Book for vehicles, the Green Guide for heavy equipment, or appraised by another independent entity. Cost of appraisal, if any, will be added to the cost of the asset.

Section XVII

Printing

A General

The Procurement Department is responsible for coordinating all printing throughout the County.

Samples of printing requests, when available from departments, should be forwarded to Procurement. This will greatly assist in obtaining quotes from vendors and will ensure that the final result is what the department had envisioned.

The Procurement Department will assist with drafting specifications and / or RFPs when necessary. The County Administrator's Project Coordinator will act as a backup to assist with the review of all proofs prior to final production.

B Items Valued Less Than \$500

All printing valued less than \$500, such as preprinted stationary, letterheads, envelopes, business cards etc., are to be ordered by the Procurement Department through the office supply requisition system.

To show consistency and unity throughout all County operations, the items should all follow the same design and layout utilized by the Board. Three quotes may be obtained if time is not of the essence.

C Items Valued More Than \$500 But Less Than \$5,000

All printing valued more than \$500 but less than \$5,000, such as brochures, manuals, flyers, maps, reports, magnets, bulk items from above, etc. are to be ordered through the Procurement Department.

To show consistency and unity throughout all County operations, the items should all follow the same design and layout utilized by the Board, if applicable. Three quotes must be obtained to guarantee good vendor relations and fair-market prices.

D Items Valued More Than \$5,000

All printing valued more than \$5,000, such as elaborate annual reports, briefings, etc. must be bid through the Procurement Department.

**Section XVIII
Recycling
(Approved 08/19/03)**

A General

The Procurement Department is responsible for coordinating all recycling throughout the County.

B Responsibility

Procurement will provide oversight of the recycling program.

C Policy

Columbia County supports conservation of scarce resources by encouraging recycling and waste reduction in its business practices and operating procedures. This commitment and support includes the purchase, use, and disposal of products and materials in a manner that will utilize natural resources and minimize adverse impact on the natural environment.

Recycling containers will be coordinated with the contracted vendor to promote the disposal, source separation and collection of the following recyclable materials:

Computer paper
Office Documents
White high grade

Printer paper
Colored or Mixed paper
Post-It Notes

Copy paper
Bond Paper
Message Pads

** No plastic coated or cardboard paper will be accepted.

Employees are authorized and directed to discontinue the use of unnecessary products and materials, which are harmful to the environment, and to reduce the use of disposable products such as paper and tape. Conservation can be promoted through the use of:

Communication through computers
Electronic file cabinets
Two-sides photocopying
Routing slips for reports
Minimum packaging

Eliminating fax cover sheets
Reusing paper clips, folders, and binders
Reusing packaging material
Turning off lights when not in use
Use of recycling bins for disposable products

Whenever cost-effective, employees are encouraged to purchase products for the workplace that contain recycled or easily recyclable materials.